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March 5, 2010

Cynthia Brown  
Chief, Section of Administration  
Office of Proceedings  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 F. Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20423

ENTERED  
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Public Record

Re: Docket No. AB-1043 (Sub-No. 1), Montreal, Maine & Atlantic  
Railway, Ltd. - Discontinuance of Service and Abandonment - In  
Arroostook and Penobscot Counties, Maine

Dear Ms. Brown:

I am writing to you as the Managing Director of Portage Wood Products, LLC, located at Portage Lake, Maine. We are a hardwood chipping facility that depends on rail to transport our product to market.

We request that the Surface Transportation Board hold a public hearing in Maine on the proposed abandonment of the Madawaska to Millinocket rail line, as well as several branch lines in northern Maine.

The rail lines that have been proposed for abandonment have provided an essential transportation link to northern Maine for over a hundred years. The rail lines continue to see heavy traffic, transporting wood products, paper products, and other commodities. The rail lines have allowed the rich natural resources of northern Maine to be transported to customers in other regions of the United States. Additionally, the rail lines have facilitated trade between Canada and the United States.

On February 25, 2010, the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway filed an abandonment application at the Board, seeking approval to abandon rail operations on and permanently remove these rail lines. A cessation of rail service would be catastrophic for the northern Maine region, causing the loss of jobs and untold hardship for local communities. When local citizens lose their rail-dependent jobs there is a great likelihood that additional businesses, such as service industries, will also be adversely affected.

A public hearing would provide local citizens, businesses, elected officials and others an opportunity to voice their concerns to the Board regarding the proposed abandonment. Furthermore, the Board would gain insight into the importance of rail service to the area, as well as the severe impact of the abandonment if approved. There is significant community awareness of and concern about the abandonment application, and a public hearing in Maine would facilitate public input on the Board's evaluation of the application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
John A. Chabwell, III